The COMMONWEAL

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THE WEEK		243
PROFESSIONALS ALL	*C. G. Paulding*	245
METROPOLIS (*Verse*)	*W. H. Auden*	246
HINDUS AND MOSLEMS	*Michael D. Lyons*	247
THE LAST CHRISTMAS	*Bernard Raymund*	350
COMMUNICATIONS		253
THE STAGE	*Kappo Phelan*	254
THE SCREEN	*Philip T. Hartung*	255
BOOKS OF THE WEEK		256

The Roosevelt I Knew—Battle for Chicago—The Idols of the Cave—Short Journey—The Formative Years of the Catholic University of America—Do I Wake or Sleep—Central-Eastern Europe—Saint Martin of Tours—Gailhac of Béziers.

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The World, This Christmas

FOR OVER A YEAR the peoples of the world have been spared the scourge of all-out war. Slowly many have been returning to their homes —or to the places where their homes once were. Neglected fields have once more known the plow and harrow and in many lands the fruit was good. Slowly, all too slowly, the walls of new homes have been rising, and factories, shops and offices are once again providing means of livelihood for mothers and the young. But in many lands hunger is still acute. Families still wander about in tattered garments lacking shelter. The bombers have flown off, but the looms are silent.

And the world is more savagely split in two. The West, with its apotheosis of human freedom, its groping and disorder, its individualism and ideals of fair play, confronts a mysterious Slav colossus impelled by a social message and an urge to run the world. The war has ended; there is a fragile peace—with, in the background, a bulging quiver of atomic-bacteriological weapons.

Christendom remains divided, as it has been for these past hundred years. Catholics and Protestants generally are perhaps beginning dimly to realize their common stake in many things and their common beliefs on many fundamentals. During war and occupation they came together in resistance groups; in certain countries—especially in the British and American zones of Germany—they have recently collaborated in social and political affairs under the banner of the Christian democrats. American Quakers with their far-flung charitable projects have as much as anyone been demonstrating where collaboration among men of differing religious beliefs can be most fruitful.

Throughout the world the Catholic Church has experienced varying changes of fortune. Persecution under Hitler and exploitation under Mussolini are no more. On the other hand terrible new obstacles have arisen in the Russian satellite zone. Conditions vary between the complete suppression in the three Baltic countries and Tito's Yugoslavia and the lesser degrees of interference in Poland, Hungary, the Russian zone of Germany and Czechoslovakia, where the present Soviet object is to avoid antagonizing. If in the end the whole continent should be swallowed up, the prospect for European Catholicism would be dark indeed.

The Far East has seen many changes. Missionaries during the war stuck to their posts but it was impossible to add to their number. Today in a country such as Japan, where emperor worship has been abolished and the people are enthusiastic about western ways, there is an unparalleled opportunity for evangelization. Meanwhile during the war such dynamic missionary orders as Maryknoll have sent their priests and Religious to the mountain fastnesses of Central and South America to bring to impoverished Indians the good tidings of the Gospel. The rate of conversions in darkest Africa is higher than for any other continent. Against the terrible losses of men and freedom and morale due to the war certain lesser compensations can be reckoned.

There are lights and shadows. One of the most uncertain is the rôle of the Orthodox Church. In Russia it has experienced a striking revival, during the war and since. To a large extent the Russian Orthodox Church has been serving as a tool for Soviet domestic and foreign policies; in that regard it tends to divide mankind still further. On the other hand churches are opening, Mass is being said, men are studying for the priesthood and the Sacraments are being administered. With these restored channels of Divine Grace again operative, may not the Russian Orthodox Church prove in the long run to be a unitive rather than a divisive force?

This Christmas, then, although much of the world still lies in ruins and men tremble in want or hunger or fear, there are motives for hope. It is possible to lift up our hearts to the message of the Angel: "Fear not; for behold I bring you tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Savior who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David."

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Questions of Guns and Butter

THE United States and United Kingdom governments have indicated forcefully that they no longer consider UNRRA relief a good thing. This magazine has almost afflicted its readers with support for war and peace relief over many years, but nevertheless, the official negative attitude of the government towards UNRRA appears correct, and the radio speech of Acting Secretary Acheson, setting down standards for recipients of official relief, sounded thoroughly convincing.

The Acting Secretary of State made four basic points, and each one was sufficient. Point "2," for example, says: "Nations receiving free relief must prove their need, and can be held more fully accountable. Those in power will be compelled to distribute relief food on the basis of need and will not be allowed to feed political supporters and starve opponents." If a state is determined to use its men and resources to make guns, diverting its powers from getting itself food, then the United States does not plan any longer to supply the food.

Masters of the subject have shown clearly how war is politics carried on with somewhat different tools and methods. Now, apparently, the peace we have is war carried on in a slightly altered form. Food was a weapon of war, and it has certainly become an instrument of totalitarian peace.

To the extent that food distribution is an official activity of our government, the government as trustee must make sure that the official politics of food distribution is safe and useful to the common good of this people. The government has no right to furnish food and the things that go into the producing of food to a Russia and Company who are believed to be diverting large proportions of their own goods and efforts to arms and armies by which they tyrannize our friends now and threaten to victimize us later.

Our government can be expected to work through a United Nations office to contribute to and raise the general economic level all around the world, and particularly the level of food production, in an over-all plan which does explicitly include turning governments and men resolutely from war economies to genuinely peace economies. Individual Americans, in their private capacities, may well be freer and less questioning in their personal charities than the government. A man personally would not look very pretty asking guarantees and demanding grateful recognition for the glasses of water and pieces of bread he should give to a person in need, even if that person's need arose from the bad government he was subject to.

We hear, by the way (as not quite an aside), that the UNRRA missions in parts of the Soviet Union are popularly known as the "American Mission." It is a carry-over from lend-lease; and also, of course, the United States contribution to UNRRA was largest by far. Still, the American representative on the UNRRA mission we speak about felt obliged in many public speeches to emphasize the things that came from Canada and England and South America and everywhere else.

Coal and Exposure

SO FAR as we know nobody died of cold during the recent coal strike—no one died of exposure. But unexpected trades and industries discovered with sudden recognition how incredibly integrated the American system is. Locally, we found interesting the disclosure of the remarkably direct and tight relationship between the miners' basic, ugly soft coal and the last, most synthetic and one would think remote construction of our culture, Broadway. The city's brownout on Broadway deflated the entertainment business terrifyingly.

That is the simple fact: without all those lights, business at the box offices and dance halls and saloons decayed seriously and people stayed home in alarming numbers. The impact was sharper in entertainment than it was in the retail and department store trades, where the dimming of display windows and showcases and decorated aisles and fitting mirrors and chandeliers undermined for a few days the urge to buy.

To keep us spending money at the proper rate—buying the right quantity of cosmetics, jewels and this year's models; and engaging expensively enough in drink and shows and other off-hour recreations—we need all the conditioners working right. Electric light, out of coal, has grown to be essential for our leisure. It would be hard now to stimulate a citizen with only gas light and candles to the amusement he gets. The useful sensations today are conditions to "spectaculars" and the animated marquee. The coal strike was really a depressant.

After President Lewis ordered the men back to the pits, New York quickly revived. *Variety* and the *Wall Street Journal* give the direct evidence in "take" and dollars and cents. The Monday morning *Times* presented solid indirect evidence in an article called "Park Avenue matron found dead in home . . . 34 years old . . . was found dead yesterday on the floor of the living room of her apartment. Her death was discovered by her husband . . . 61, a broker. . . . told the police that he and his wife had returned from the Stork Club at 1:30 A. M. and that she immediately took one sleeping pill and lay down on the floor, a procedure that she had followed many times. He put a pillow under her head,

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covered her and fell asleep in a chair. When he awoke about 5 A. M. he could not arouse her. . . ." There was no dim-out at the Stork. The Park Avenue Association revived normal plans for putting up huge, bright lighted Christmas trees at each crossing again this year.

Renewing a Decency Pledge

IT IS rather easy to take a gloomy view of the morality which for years has been coming out of Hollywood. Phony idealism, extreme sentimentality and the substitution of actors with huge movie magazine followings for any attempt at interpretation or ideas are among the principal ingredients. Still more venal is the crass materialism—take the Hollywood idea of an apartment or a hotel room—which provides the motivating spirit and residual effect of the majority of contemporary productions. Anyone with doubts should ask himself whether he is honestly glad that these are the dominant means for conveying to foreign audiences what life and ideals in the United States are like, that American movies are everywhere so popular.

That practically none of these productions openly incites to sexual immorality is due more to the Legion of Decency than to any other agency. During its twelve years of bringing the sizable influence of Catholic patrons to bear on this one point, it has been remarkably effective; socially-minded Americans of every belief should, and sometimes do, feel grateful that the Catholic Church has been making such vigorous efforts to protect this aspect of the public's morals.

The basically worthy and appropriate (if wholly negative) character of this thankless sort of boycott-censorship has apparently obscured the need for adequate care in the way the annual Legion pledge is administered year by year. A wide disparity obtained in the way the pledge was administered on December 8, 1946. A few parishes did nothing about it. Generally the pledge was read from the pulpit with congregations either remaining seated, or more often (and this might have proved embarrassing for non-jurors) being asked to kneel or stand.

Possibly by now the Legion pledge itself should be so well known that anyone unable in conscience sincerely to make such promises could actually refrain. But there is something disturbing about blindly starting to make a solemn promise whose terms are not fully known.

This particularly applies to the accretions to the original Legion of Decency movie pledge which have accumulated with the years. Here again the widest variety obtains, parish by parish, diocese by diocese. The pledge now goes all the way from a simple promise not to patronize films of an objectionable nature—or theaters which show them as a matter of policy—to an over-all one which extends to night clubs in certain instances and especially to books, periodicals and newspapers. In this latter case the promise is so sweeping (it includes texts and illustrations and bars further patronage of offending publishers, distributors and retail outlets) that anyone who fully realized what he was pledging himself not to do would actually find himself unable to buy at retail a single book, magazine or newspaper, or patronize a single big department store. That such abstention might not be a wholly bad thing is not the point.

What does call for serious consideration is this. If the faithful find thrust upon them each year promises so sweeping that they would change the habits of a lifetime, so that these people can no longer patronize their local newsdealer, magazine stand or candy store, or buy a Sunday paper, they simply will dismiss it. Objectionable "literature" will continue to wax fat. And instead of cleaning up the newsstands we shall be troubling delicate consciences or diluting the seriousness with which the great bulk of American Catholics accept what they hear in church.

Professionals All

PERHAPS WHEN a scientist is old enough and retired he has a second childhood, and it is possible that he might talk to you then about the dreams of his first childhood; he might be innocent again. It would not matter if he slobbered and drooled and kept falling asleep—if from time to time you could distinguish the word cancer, the word paralysis, the word misery, the word cure; if occasionally you could know that he was trying to make you see a desert and then—a child with a crayon coloring the page—showing you what the desert would be when science had made it green, with rivers, trees, pastures, houses, with men and women walking in the roads, bathing in the rivers, walking at the edge of the corn fields, the wheat fields, walking in the cool forests, with science making the tall white clouds so that the sun and the moon would come and go between them. You would hear him say science is working on that, the Chinese will never starve again, the Indians in India will never starve again; if the pygmies in Africa desire to grow tall we can attend to that, we can ruin the freak shows of the circus because there won't be the six hundred pound boy, the bearded lady, the Siamese twins; also I promise you there will never be another child born with two heads, not even a calf with two heads, and the little fox terrier in the museum at Albi will stay there—in his bottle of alcohol, looking at you with one head as you come in and with the other head as you go out—forever, be-

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cause there will never be another fox terrier born with two heads. We will attend to that.

The scientists at the Rockefeller Foundation, when last heard of, talked this way even in their official reports; they thought that science should help humanity and not destroy it; they were engaged actually in work intended to help humanity and not destroy it. Perhaps they still think that way; perhaps they still are working. There are some doctors in the hospitals who still are trying to cure people and of course there is the country doctor who never thought of trying to do anything else. But doctors after all are not real scientists and the Rockefeller people although scientists are eccentrics; they live in an ivory tower intently concerned with nothing but human suffering.

The scientist of our day is the atom bomb man. While the war was on, patriotically he made the bomb. Now that the war is ended, wisely he warns us that if we ever use it again other people will use it; there is no defense against it; if it is ever used by anyone, everyone will use it; if there is another war everyone will use it no matter what agreements they may have made not to use it; if there is another war, the scientist says, there will be nothing left of anything. With his peculiar logic therefore the atom bomb scientist continues now to make atom bombs.

The scientist now is also the rocket bomb man, the supersonic speed man, the man who can send the atom bomb round the world and have it blow up in his face when he turns round to watch it come back—the man who can invent the atomic boomerang.

The American scientists worked patriotically at the bomb and at the planes during the war; across the ocean the German scientists worked patriotically at the bomb and at the planes. What else could they do if they were patriots? What else could scientists do if they were scientists? Because it now appears that the rôle of the scientist today is to make bombs, and planes to carry them in—and it does not matter for whom. It has become possible now to do away with all narrow notions of nationalism and patriotism. It is like an amateur sport that has turned professional; the scientists play now for any team under any management.

While the war lasted, we kept up the pretense of being really Oxfords, really Harvards, really Yales—perhaps the German scientists still wore their student's caps; we bombed Peenemunde indignantly; but now it's all strictly professional, there's no hard feeling, and the brightest star of Peenemunde V2 research, Baron Wernher von Braun, is here playing on our team. Dr. Alex Lippisch, designer of the ME-163, Dr. Helmut Heinrich of the Graf Zeppelin Institute, are playing on our team. Eighty-six German scientists are here, seven hundred and thirty more are coming. We have bought them for our team—$6 a day for living allowance, $2.20 to $11 remitted to their families in Germany—their presence will save us, according to "Army Air Force spokesmen," $200,000,000 in aeronautical research alone. The Army Air Force spokesmen call this operation ("Paperclip") "thorough exploitation of enemy science."

But it is not exploitation; it is not slave labor; all the German scientists came voluntarily; most of them desire to remain in this country; it is only that we have reached, openly now, the International of Scientists for World Destruction.

C. G. PAULDING.

Metropolis

The scene has all the signs of a facetious culture,
Publishing houses, pawn-shops and pay-toilets;
August and graeco-roman are the granite temples
Of the medicine men whose magic keeps this body
Politic free from fevers,
Cancer and constipation.

The rooms near the railroad stations are rented mainly
By the criminally-inclined; the Castle is open on Sundays
There are parks for plump and playgrounds for pasty children;
The police must be large, but little men are hired to
Service the subterranean
Miles of dendritic drainage.

A married tribe commutes, mild from suburbia,
Whom ritual rules protect from raids by the nomad
Misfortunes they fear; for they flinch in their dreams at the scratch
Of coarse pecuniary claws, at crying images,
Petulant, thin, reproachful,
Destitute shades of dear ones.

Well, here I am but how, how, asks the visitor
Strolling through the strange streets, can I start to discover
The fashionable feminine fret or the form of insult
Minded most by the men? In what myth do their sages
Locate the cause of evil?
How are these people punished?

How, above all, will they end? By any natural
Fascination of frost or flood? Or from the artful
Obliterating bang whereby God's rebellious image,
After thousands of thankless years spent in thinking about it,
Finally finds a solid
Proof of its independence?

W. H. AUDEN.

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Hindus and Mohammedans

The background of baffling obstacles to a unified India for the Indians

Michael D. Lyons

TO UNDERSTAND the present political crisis in India, which takes effect also in London, one must go back in history beyond the recent riots and the war which is gradually being concluded. Calcutta is a center which furnishes an example or case history of what has led to trouble.

The Hindu province of Bengal with its great city of Calcutta readily accepted the education offered by the British in the nineteenth century. But the Mohammedans, who had ruled over much of that part of India before the advent of the East India Company, were sullen. They spurned the Christian's learning, while the Hindus wisely regarded the study of the culture of the conquerors as an opportunity for advancement they could not afford to neglect.

A little learning can sometimes be dangerous for conquerors, when the conquered get it. The Bengal Hindus made rapid progress in all branches of European learning, including the dangerous political notions of the great British orators. They made progress at a rate unsurpassed in other parts of India, and they were beginning to influence their fellow-countrymen in all corners of the land.

In 1905 there took place the Partition of Bengal, an event which no Indian forgets. This Partition, or gerrymandering, gave rise to the world-famed Bengal Terrorist Movements, and it gave a powerful impetus also to the idea of a struggle for absolute independence for India in place of the previous ideal of Dominion Status inside the Empire, which had been entertained as something ultra-advanced in the good old days of Queen Victoria.

The rearrangement of provincial boundaries made by the British brought it about that predominantly Hindu areas in the east and west of the old province went to other provinces. The province of Bengal in its new form was approximately half Hindu and half Mohammedan. The British as a result could control any provincial committee or council with only a few of their representatives.

The Mohammedans were not slow to see their opportunity to rule to some extent over their former scenes of power, and they generally cooperated with the twentieth-century conqueror. Hindus were properly squelched whenever it was authoritatively deemed necessary.

During the days of the recent war, when the Japanese were at the border of Bengal, the discontented Hindus were kept in order by the Mohammedan Premier Fuzul Haq and his associated Ministers, who ran the machinery of government for Governor Herbert. Trains moved regularly, supplies were carried to the front. It was a good arrangement from the standpoint of general and military order.

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It was, at least until complications set in during 1942. There was trouble about food supplies. Burma, which had supplied five percent of the rice of India, fell into Japanese hands. Some damage to Bengal crops was caused by a tornado. Railway trains, normally used to carry away cash crops like jute and to bring in return food grains from other areas, were taken over by the British and American armies for operations at the front. Some food was shipped from India to the troops in the Middle East while Mussolini ruled over his Mare Nostrum. There was not much of a shortage in Bengal, but there was some shortage as a result of these various events.

Millions in Bengal could stand no shortage at all. People sitting on a bench can move over—all except the person on the end. Millions in Bengal were subsisting on the very verge of starvation even in peace times. Then panic came into the land. Panic can cause a famine in a country with plenty of food. It caused a severe famine in Bengal.

A handful in every community made fortunes while millions starved to death. The Indians who were in power, in the ultimate analysis because of the Partition of Bengal, were not trusted by the Hindu masses and received scant cooperation. Black market operations and hoarding quickly reached unheard of heights.

Millions starved, but the troop trains kept moving. Mohammedan officials made dishonest fortunes, but they kept law and order. There was a famine, true, but there was also a war on. Dishonest, bribe-taking, callous officials were a scourge, but they could not be changed without endangering military operations and the smooth

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working of the machinery of law and order, which was so necessary in a province which was a base of military operations.

Tens of thousands of American soldiers were stationed in and about Calcutta, defending Indian masses who were not very interested in any defense. "Let the Japanese in if you wish. What does it matter to us? If we cannot get independence, let us at least have a change of masters." So said many. When they were told that the Japanese were cruel, that the Japanese would kill them, the Hindus generally replied, "So much the better, we will be put out of our misery. Anything is better than our present living death."

The American soldiers who came into the city to see movies and to dance to the excellent music of Firpos and the Great Eastern and other restaurants and hotels, were shocked by scenes which they will never forget and which few of them wish to recall. Women carrying infants with arms as thick as a man's thumb cried piteously for the equivalent of a nickel. Men were less in evidence, perhaps because men have less stamina in such circumstances, perhaps because they had left their families and were trying to find food for themselves elsewhere. There were old men and old women lying about in the streets, looking like living skeletons. Dogs fought with human beings for the refuse of Europeans' kitchens, and with vultures for the bodies of the dead. American soldiers seeing the mobs about the garbage cans of their camps, ate less of the food on their plates in the mess halls. Superior officers then passed orders that garbage in the future should not be given to starving people, but incinerated. It was explained that the soldiers needed all the strength they could get for the days of battle.

Meanwhile, exponents of the views of the Moslem League were introduced to the men in the Red Cross educational centers, and pin-up girls were publicized in the theater newspaper. Efforts were made to drive the dying from the parts of Calcutta used by the troops for recreation and entertainment. It was bad for their morale to see what was going on.

Estimates of the number who died of outright starvation vary from 1,500,000 to 5,000,000, the latter figure being that of statisticians of Calcutta University. In some areas the price of a bag of rice went up from five rupees to over a hundred rupees. Nevertheless, a year or two after the famine, rice was still being taken out, much of it spoiling, from places in which many tons of it had been hoarded. A Famine Inquiry Commission later gave it as their considered opinion that the famine had been largely man-made.

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Early in 1946 the governments of many provinces in India were entrusted to ministries appointed by the majority political groups. The Congress Party, made up of people of all communities, mainly, though, of the dominant Hindu element, soon controlled seven or eight of the eleven provinces. The Mohammedans, however, retained power in Calcutta and Bengal.

Throughout the land there was anticipation of trouble. The Mohammedans of India did not like the new trend. The rule of India had been taken from them originally by the Christian power. They did not want to see the government of the land they had once controlled handed over by the receding Christians to the Hindus they had once held in subjection.

The British were tired of maintaining law and order in India, and they could not in the face of public opinion at home continue such wartime measures of repression as the imposition of fines on whole villages. They begged the Indian leaders to take over the running of their own country, allowing the British only one essential, favored treatment in business and in trade agreements. The Congress Party was willing to make the inevitable compromises and to accept the Herculean task of governing the largest undivided nation in the modern world. They insisted, however, that representation in the new government should be on a strictly democratic and proportional basis.

The majority of the Mohammedans, however, belonging to the Moslem League, headed by the famous intransigent gentleman in his seventies, Mr. Jinnah, would not agree to the proposed representation on the basis of electoral strength. Although the Mohammedan groups represented by the Moslem League form, like the Catholics of the United States, but a fifth of the total population of the country, they demanded parity in the Viceroy's reformed Executive Council or quasi-cabinet, which was designed to conduct the affairs of the new central government.

The Congress Party refused this demand. When the Viceroy was unable to get the leaders of the two parties to agree, he asked the majority party, the Congress Party, to form a government at New Delhi with those other Indians who would be willing to work with them. The Congress Party consented to this arrangement, and they were joined by a minority among the Mohammedans, and by Christians, Sikhs, Parsis and other of the peoples of India. The Moslem League remained aloof and there were ugly mutterings about bloodshed.

Shortly after the formation of the new government, Mr. Jinnah announced a Day of Mourning to express the sorrow of the Moslem Leaguers over the accession of the Congress Party to power. The foundations were laid for trouble. Calcutta municipal employees belonging to the Mohammedan religion were given a

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holiday by the Municipal Corporation to observe this Day of Mourning. Rumors spread that the police service for the most part would close an eye to what happened. Riots immediately broke out.

Conservative estimates place the number of dead at four thousand. While corpses rotted in the streets of Calcutta, the British daily, the *Calcutta Statesman,* charged local authorities with responsibility for the riots. Shortly after this event, Mohammedans in parts of eastern Bengal, where they form the majority, attacked Hindus, and revived the ancient sport of converting at the point of the sword.

The Moslem League has for several years been asking for what they call Pakistan, literally "holy land"; parts of India to be cut off from the rest of India and made into new countries of Mohammedan rule. Mohammedan minorities remaining in Hindu parts of India would be hostages for the proper treatment of Hindu minorities living in Pakistan, they explained. Perhaps this proposal, an ancient tribal idea indeed, gave the Hindus a suggestion of what they could do about riots in Bengal.

In a few weeks—it takes weeks to prepare a good riot as a rule—Mohammedans were being butchered in the nearby province of Bihar and in other parts of India where the Hindus are in the majority. Meanwhile, the Moslem Leaguers changed their minds and decided that they, too, would join the government in Delhi. After some more haggling they accepted five seats out of a total of fourteen in the Viceroy's Executive Council.

To quell the riots and to study the situation on the spot Gandhi took along a member of the Moslem League and hastened to Bengal. Nehru, the vice-president of the Executive Council, went with another Moslem Leaguer to Bihar. Gandhi announced that he would begin a fast unto death if the Bihar riots (really retaliatory massacres of Mohammedans) did not cease. As usual his threat created a profound impression on the masses, and quiet returned in Bihar.

The magnitude of the riots should not be exaggerated. When the vastness of the population of India is considered, it will probably appear that the deaths caused by such riots in India are proportionately not more numerous than those caused by racial riots in the United States over an extended period of time.

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The basis for friction between the two communities is the existence of differences in their modes of life. Differences cause friction. The differences are many and some are indeed great.

The Hindus are abstemious, even puritanical. They have a long list of taboos. Hindu women of the upper and middle castes are noted for their devotion to their husbands, and when their men die their widows never remarry. Even Hindu widows in their teens must remain unmarried for the rest of their lives, or they will be outcasted by their families and Hindu society. The Hindus are very proud of their ancient culture and make every effort to preserve it in the modern world.

Mohammedans, who came into India with ideas familiar to us from the Old Testament, have remained a people apart. They speak with many words of Arabic or Persian origin as a matter of pride and tradition. They generally write not with the traditional scripts of India, but with an adaptation of the Arabic and Persian ways of writing. Mohammedans will not eat pork, but they relish beef, which is at least as disgusting to the Hindus as hot puppies would be to American college alumnae at a reunion banquet. So far from having any objection to widow remarriage, Mohammedans cause no little trouble by trying to convert the prettier Hindu widows by methods which are generally far from religious arguments. At this writing the Hindus are agitating for the recovery of Hindu women kidnapped by Mohammedans during the recent riots of eastern Bengal. It would require many pages to list all of the differences between these two communities.

The Mohammedans apparently actually try to emphasize the differences between their followers and the rest of the people of India. While Christian Indians as a rule can hardly be distinguished from their fellow-countrymen by their dress, Mohammedan Indians usually dress in a manner which is strikingly different. They seem to fear that if they do not keep aloof from their fellow-countrymen by manifold external differences they will find that "Islam is in danger," words often heard coming from the lips of their leaders.

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In all fairness it may be said that Mohammedan fears are not altogether baseless. What may happen to a minority under Hindu rule is perhaps exemplified in the semi-independent state of Travancore. The Christians, who number nearly 2,000,000 of the approximately 10,000,000 population of the state, are at present subjected to a severe persecution by the autocratic Dewan or Prime Minister, the Hindu Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar. This persecution is attracting attention in religious groups of diverse faiths in America and Europe. Christian education especially is being subjected to attack. In vain do Congress leaders point out that the Congress head, Nehru, is bitter in his denunciation of the feudalism of "Sir C.P." Christians to no little

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extent and Mohammedans almost unanimously fear Hindu ascendancy in governmental authority and influence.

Left to themselves the various communities among the Indians will probably work out many practical ways of getting along together. Britain as a peacemaker is probably as useful as a mother-in-law in a quarrel of newlyweds. There are very few communal clashes in the semi-independent states of India ruled by rajas and other Indian princes. Injustices do exist. They exist everywhere in the world. But bloody strife such as the recent riots of British India provinces is practically unknown in the parts governed by Indians in their own ways. Left to themselves the Congress majority party would probably settle the Moslem League "revolt" in a few weeks, with some disturbances, perhaps. But no great government was ever formed or great nation born with absolutely no bloodshed or abortive civil war.

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Will outsiders stir up more trouble in India? The British today want law and order and a peaceful India for the purposes of trade and commerce in which they are greatly interested, as well as for altruistic reasons. No one knows, however, what will be done by Pan-Islamites and by the Bear to the northwest, who ever since the early days of the reign of Queen Victoria has been a source of worry and speculation to the rulers of India.

The present sporadic and occasional communal riots in India hardly affect business and commerce and industry in that country but there are occasional disturbances due to quarrels between capital and labor which do affect industry and trade. These latter will probably increase as time goes on and may cause far more serious dislocation of the Indian economy. Such disturbances may be more important in the future than the present "community" riots.

The Indian problems we have been considering are actually not peculiar to India at all. If they are solved in India, the world will stand to benefit in the solution of minorities problems over many parts of the world. Also, if solutions are found for such problems in Europe—and in the United States—India will stand to benefit.

India is not a land of only two communities. It has many elements of greatly different outlooks. The very diversity of India life, however, may eventually make it easier for a moderately strong Indian government to carry on without fear of anything like a civil war. Lovers of democracy throughout the world will be inclined to sit back and give the Indians time to put their house in order without making premature criticism.

The Last Christmas

Bernard Raymund

WHEN THEY CAME to his grandfather Mackay's house early on Christmas morning the game was always to see who could say *it* first. But from the time he had been old enough to know anything about it he had always lost. Always as they approached the steps and his dad shifted the bundles of presents in his arms so he could put a hand under his mother's elbow, the front door burst open and the whole crowd of them, his grandfather in the lead, rushed to the edge of the porch shouting *Merry Christmas!* It was like one great concerted laughing thunderclap, and, no matter how hard he tried, it always caught him unprepared. And his grandfather would stand, his mouth wide open, his eyes puckered into blue smiling knots, pointing a gnarled forefinger down at him as if to reproach him for not being first. No matter how warm was their greeting he felt reproachful with himself and scarcely heard when grandfather said, "No, don't stop to take off your rubbers! Here Toots, Jim Boy, Mugs (who but his grandfather ever called Russell that?) help Frank get rid of some of these bundles. And Sadie, got a kiss for your old father?"

This year he really would beat. He was bigger for one thing, and he had it all planned. He would not be startled this time, he would not laugh as he always had before—how could he say *it* when he was laughing? He would begin to take a deep breath just as they passed Dr. Carr's yard, where on each concrete post sat an iron dog holding an end of the iron pipe in his mouth. He would get a good breath and he hoped his mother would not say anything to him so he had to let it out before he got there. That way he most certainly would beat—that is if he didn't holler before the door opened. He could just imagine his feeling of triumph when grandfather would say, "Well, what do you know about that? Baber beat us this time. He most certainly did!"

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When they had crossed the mounds of frozen slush between the street car and the curb he put his own small load of presents on top of the heap in his father's arms.

"Here, what's this?" his father grunted. "Haven't I got enough to carry? Can't see where I am going as it is."

"I wanta take a slide," he explained. He could not tell the real reason—that would sound silly, and he guessed not even his mother knew how he felt about losing every Christmas. His mortification had been too deep to tell anybody about it. Along here there was a good place anyhow, where the pavement had sunk a bit, and taking a short run, his overcoat streaming behind him, he made two complete exhilarating turns. Now he would be the first one there, so there would be less likelihood of his mother or dad getting in the way. Without stopping to pat the head of the nearest iron dog, he filled his lungs with crisp cold air. Now he was all ready.

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But as he came in sight of his grandfather's house it came over him that something was different, something not as it had always been. And though it was a small thing and one to be met with everywhere here, in the neat snowy quadrangle of lawn that faced the street it seemed so out of place that it made everything different. Different, and kind of wrong, as if they had come to the wrong address and this was not grandfather's house but that of some strangers and not even on grandfather's street. And the thought of all the queer wrongness ran down his neck in a small prickling stream of cold and he had a sense in that instant that anything might happen and none of it good.

It was a wooden sign, leaning sidewise with an accumulation of snow; forgetting all the fine plans he had made he stopped to read it, his hoard of air escaping in a long plume of frozen vapor. "For Sale," the sign read. "This Beautiful Residence Property." And below, in large red capitals, "See Your Broker!"

He was wondering if the people out in his grandfather's end of town, the people who would be the only ones likely to pass this way and see the sign, kept brokers in the same fashion that they kept Negro chauffeurs, when his mother leaned over him and hissed, "If I hear *one question* out of you, young man, you know what will happen to *you!*" And though he tried to get another breath ready, somehow it hurt, not in his windpipe where cold air naturally ought to hurt, but in the corners of his eyes and across the bridge of his nose.

But there was no need, for this time the door did not burst open, nor did the family rush out to meet them. In fact they were already up the steps and across the icy veranda before the door was opened, this time not by grandfather, but by Russell.

"Merry Christmas!" he crowed, but if Russell answered he did not hear him.

"I beat, that time!" he exulted, though feeling at the same instant foolish and unnecessarily noisy. "I beat, didn't I?"

"Well?" asked Russ so morosely that any further word he might have uttered seemed to congeal in his throat in a hard and distasteful lump.

His grandmother in her apron had come up behind Russell. "Children, for heaven's sake get away from the doorway so Frank and Sadie can come in out of the cold!"

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The door closed, they stood in the dark of the hall a moment breathing the heavy warmth. The chill of outdoors departed from him with one last delightful shiver. The smell of his grandmother's Christmas dinner floated tantalizing from the kitchen.

"Where's Papa?" Baber's mother asked brightly, as if this happened every Christmas morning, as if it *could* happen and nothing be different from all the Christmas mornings of the past.

"Oh, your father slept late." His grandmother's attempt at a light tone did not quite come off. "He stays up until one or two over his solitaire and then he don't seem to get properly asleep. Henry!" she called up the stairs, "Come down and see who's here!"

Grandfather was already coming—not, as Baber was used to seeing him Christmas morning, in his maroon smoking jacket with gilt braid, but wrapped in a faded flannel robe, worn mules on his bare feet that slapped on every step.

"Merry Christmas!" he called out from the landing—and when his eyes twinkled down on them, what difference did it make that he wasn't dressed?

He folded Baber's mother in a hug, gigantic for so small a man, and accepted her kiss; while Baber, clinging to the edge of his robe danced about crying, "Grandpa, see what I got for you!"

He took the narrow package, done in white tissue and tied with silver cord.

"Open it! Open it, Grandpa!"

"Wait. Let me guess what it is!" His grandfather closed his eyes, running his fingers over the package. "I would say it is the kind that doesn't have to be tied. Nothing to fuss with, just slip the ends under your collar. Am I right Baber? And the color, let me see." He held it to his nose, his eyes twinkling. "Black? Or is it blue with white polka-dots?"

Baber clapped his hand over his mouth to

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keep from laughing outright at that, while his grandmother flounced her apron exclaiming "Oh, Henry, don't be foolish! Here, Frank has something for you and you haven't paid the least bit of attention."

"Ah, cigars! How did you guess it, Frank? I was clear out. Just going to send Muggsy out for some."

Baber tried not to notice Russ's air of injured unbelief. It made him want to take a swat at him, again. If grandfather said so, why . . . then and there his grandfather drew out his amber cigar-holder from the pocket of his night shirt and lit his first Christmas morning smoke from the match Baber's dad held for him. "You know, Frank," he explained, "I've never attempted to buy a gift for you since that Christmas we both gave each other, remember, Kipling's 'Many Inventions.'". And at the recollection of that, the most ridiculous of Christmases, they guffawed and slapped one another on the back and spilled cigar ashes on grandmother's hall rug.

The bell pealed and his grandfather opened the door with a "Merry Christmas" that almost blew the postman from the veranda and returned with a tightly rolled cylinder.

"Here's your present to your old father, Sadie Mackay!" he cried. "Every week, right on the dot! Now," he slit the cover with his thumbnail, shook out the copy of the *Outlook,* "we'll see what Lyman Abbott's bright young men have to say this time."

"Henry," mother said, "aren't you *ever* going to get dressed?"

But grandfather, having retrieved his spectacles from the mantle had settled deep in his leather rocker and with a sigh of content, had cocked his feet before the fire.

The tree stood in the corner of the parlor as always, no change could touch *that,* giving off the exciting, resinous smell of Christmas, colored electric bulbs shining from its dusky interior in place of the candles that at home had to be lit with so many precautions, and after too brief a display blown out—the lowermost for him, the top ones for his dad's strong lungs. Under it were parcels still unopened, that he knew without telling were for him, and sitting on the floor he opened them hastily. Captain Marryatt's "Japhet in Search of a Father," and the larger package a marble game with a labyrinth of brass pegs and a bell that counted 1,000 if you rang it. It was foolish how grandfather continued to insist that Santa had left them there for him; he seemed really to believe it and Baber had stopped trying to convince him that he was wrong.

While they were at work coupling on the new cars to Russ's electric train, he heard his father stretch himself heavily on grandfather's leather sofa in the sitting room; from the kitchen came the voices of the womenfolk, his mother in an apron many sizes too large for her, grandmother, and Bilikims, who limped about complaining that they were in her way. There was a rustle on the stairs and Toots, a vision in pink with many flounces, descended slowly, calling "Merry Christmas!" and giving them a wide smile over the banisters. Perching on the piano stool, she sleepily looked over the pieces of new sheet music, *her* present evidently, and then swung herself by one toe absently watching their railroad operations.

"Her fella's takin' her sleigh-riding," whispered Russ.

"Gosh!" Baber exclaimed. "Suppose we could ride on the runners?"

His aunt had overheard. "I'll say you can't!" she laughed shortly. "Not much!"

And presently there came a jangle of sleigh-bells outside, hearing which grandfather flung down his magazine, laid his cigar and spectacles aside, and gathering his robe about him clattered to his room.

Mother answered the door while Toots slipped into her fur coat, wound a pink "Alice" veil about her dark head. Her sister looked anxiously round the edge of the dining room door.

"Be back in time for dinner, Toots?"

Toots shook her head. "Don't set a place for me, Bilikims. We're eating at the Neil House." And in a draft of icy air Toots swept grandly away before Baber could even see what the "fella" looked like.

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His grandfather composed his features, shut his eyes tight and said the briefest possible grace. As all unfolded their napkins, the big Christmas ones with fringed borders, Russ asked, "I get a drumstick, don't I papa?"

But seated at grandfather's left, Baber could see that there was no use asking, for it was a roast of beef—and on Christmas! Grandfather carved deftly, without comment, flipping the pieces on the plates, dishing up the mashed potatoes and the scalloped oysters, Baber's mother adding the gravy, the creamed cauliflower, the cranberry jelly. But of course there was no dressing. From her end of the table grandmother circulated the hot biscuit, the butter, the celery hearts and stuffed olives. And when grandfather had served everyone, Bilikims brought him two poached eggs. He looked at them on his plate, and it seemed to Baber that he saw two tears run down grandfather's nose and drop on them. But of course that couldn't be, not on Christmas.

"Henry is so cranky about his eating," grandmother said across the table. "I declare, Sadie, you have no idea the notions. . . ."

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"He always was cranky; weren't you papa?" Baber's mother laughed. "Papa, do you remember . . ."

"Aw, Sadie!" grandfather howled, his napkin held out in his fist as if he would leave the table if she kept on.

And after that nobody said anything. Only Baber's mother kept putting things on grandfather's plate: first one of the hot biscuits to sop up the egg, and then a bit of scalloped oyster, and pretty soon his grandfather seemed to feel a lot better. But he would not touch his mince pie, but passed it over to Baber when his mother wasn't looking; he never did eat it anyhow. And when he complained that grandmother had put cream in his coffee when she had known all her life he always took it black, everybody knew the worst was over. Even if there was something wrong that no one wanted to talk about, the Christmas dinner was not spoiled after all.

Afterward, when he and Russell were playing the marble game, grandfather came and stood over them to watch, his cigar between his thumb and forefinger and made so many wisecracks that Russ said, "All right, papa, if you're so smart why don't you play too?"

So grandfather woke up Baber's dad, and got paper and pencil to keep score with; then they both got down on the floor with Russ and Baber and went to it. Between them they thought up a lot of trick rules, such as if you hit the bell with your first marble, it counted a thousand off your score, and if you shot out of turn whatever you made was taken off. And just when they had got to the most exciting part and grandfather and Russ were tied at fifteen thousand, grandmother came with Russ's overcoat and said that if he was going to take his present over to Johnnie Jabo he'd have to go now.

When they got back his grandfather was reading out loud. The words he could not distinguish, the rich, rounded syllables, like spoken music, stopped him in his tracks.

"Boys," grandmother spoke from somewhere, "I set your ice cream in the ice box. Guess you can share Toots's between you; it will be all melted before she gets back."

"Is it N'apolitan?" Russ wanted to know.

They heard grandmother sigh. "If it's Neapolitan you have to have, young man, you're going to be disappointed. The almond macaroons are in the dish on the dining table. Please try to leave some for someone else!"

Although Russ bolted for the back hall, Baber could not leave the doorway to the sitting room. Only the reading lamp was lit and all he could see was his grandfather's wisp of fine hair, the red-covered book he held up before him. Baber's mother sat on the edge of her chair, facing grandfather, while in the shadows beyond the fireplace he saw the glint of his dad's spectacles, the glow of his cigar. Oh why hadn't he stayed so he could hear it all?

For just then grandfather closed the book with a snap. "And that's all!" He rubbed his big nose on the back of his hand, sniffed delightedly. "That's Mark Twain for you, ageless and undimmed!"

"Like you, papa."

Grandfather shook a warning finger at her. "Enough of that, Sadie!"

"Frank, be sure to write the title down so we can get it sure; I want to read it again. Will they have it at the library do you think?"

"They will not," grandfather smiled maliciously. "I've tried them, just as an experiment. Don't you know, Sadie, that the libraries are afraid of books like that? I'd lend you my copy quick enough," he lowered his voice, peeped around the back of his chair to make sure that grandmother was not within hearing, "only I promised it to Dr. Carpenter."

"Of the First Methodist?" Baber's dad sounded as if he did not believe it. "Aren't you afraid of his orthodoxy?"

Grandfather cleared his throat, smiled mischievously. "Frank, this is what the legal brethren would call a privileged communication."

This time when Baber's mother said they must go, that Aunt Tassie would be expecting them this evening, he did not protest. He did not say, "Aw Mom, do we hafta? This is Christmas, Mom!" No, he was as surprised as his mother was how quickly he got his rubbers on and put on his muffler and overcoat—and even remembered to help his dad into his. I want to go now, he said to himself, I want to go before grandmother turns on the overhead lights, so I can remember grandfather sitting there like that, so I can remember how his voice sounded, I want to go before I break down and bawl.

Communications

GERTRUDE STEIN

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editors: Could Anne Fremantle give some evidence for her statement that Gertrude Stein "was always intensely aware that the word is also the Word" (THE COMMONWEAL, October 25)? I have not recognized this awareness in G.S.'s writings.

NORMAN WEYAND, S.J.

New York, N. Y.

THAT WRITER, M. Maritain has said, is a creator who finds a new analogy of the beautiful. In the last resort, every cognition of God is based on a form of relation between Him and His creatures, on a manifestation of God in or through something else, and not on

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a relation between Him and Himself—whatever and however He is, we can know only by analogy. Gertrude Stein is always, it seems to me, aware of this truth, aware of the entire dependence of the word—of every word ever written—on the Word, and of its existence only within this framework and within the terms of that relationship. And just as the writer himself, because he has been created, can never be destroyed—even by, or in God, because that destruction would be a denial of the Creator by Himself, so neither can the writer destroy his own creations. Forever and forever Brewsie and Willie argue; Melanctha dies indestructibly in the hospital for colored consumptives. Gertrude Stein has towards her characters the detachment of the truly creative writer: she learnt to listen to herself living. Which is one of the hardest things to do, in life or in literature. For as Rilke said, it's as though one stood night and day beside a noisy waterfall. And many who do succeed, find themselves only hearkening to their own heart beating, and are either deafened, or begin to count (and this last way lies madness). Gertrude Stein also deliberately sets her creatures free—she tosses her clay sparrows—"Four Saints in Three Acts" or Ida or Picasso—into the air and away they fly. And that is part of the duty imposed on the writer: for it is inherent in the nature of any finally perfect love that sooner or later it may no longer reach the loved one save in the infinite, and that is true also of the author's loves, his characters. At some moment whilst Count Tolstoi was writing "War and Peace" Natasha and Prince Andrei stole away from him, "like the shadows of ascending birds." Gertrude Stein is drawn into the confidence of her characters, watching them—even watching herself even when she is writing about herself—as though in a distant mirror.

Nor is it necessary to deduce her theory from her practice: she has described her own awareness in many theoretical statements. In "Portraits and Prayers," for example, she says, "and so I went on with this exceeding struggle of knowing really knowing what a thing was really knowing it knowing anything I was seeing anything I was feeling so that its name could be something by its name coming to be a thing in itself as it was but would not be anything to put it only as a name the name of a thing might be something in itself if it could come to be real enough but just as a name it was not enough something." And again, in her lecture on pictures, she says "to finish a thing that is to keep on finishing a thing that is to be one going on finishing a thing so that something is a thing that anyone can see is a finished thing is something . . . to begin a thing that anyone can see is begun is something." And again of English literature she writes "that is the difference between serving God and mammon . . . as I talk of serving God and mammon I do not of course mean religion in any sense except the need to complete that which is trying to fill itself up inside any one, and this may be part of the same inside in one or it may not, if it is then it is a complete daily life, if it is not then it is not."

Saint Augustine said *"vertitatem, undelibet tibi loquatur, esuriens accipe,"* and there is a thirsty famished wolfing down or gobbling up of truth in everything Gertrude Stein writes. Take her earliest book, "Three Lives": "Melanctha Herbert was always losing what she had in wanting all the things she saw. Melanctha was always being left when she was not leaving others." Or "Ida" "someone told her . . . no matter what the day is it always ends the same day no matter what happens in the year the day's end is one day." And in "Singing to a Musician," "A tall man has to touch a tree, a tall man has to touch his knee a knee is necessary for kneeling."

It is always hard to cut bits off writings and offer them as appetizers, as samples of the writer's consciousness, but I think if you read "Wars I Have Seen," or "Brewsie and Willie," you will realize why William James thought his pupil a greater and a better philosopher than himself. To end—since you write from the Middle West from which she came—with a brief description she made: "and so America is at the present moment the oldest country in the world, for she had her twentieth century birthday in the 1880's long before any other country had their twentieth century birthday. After all anybody is as their land and air is. Anybody is as the sky is low or high anybody is as there is wind or no wind there. That is what makes people makes their kind, looks their kind, their thinking, their subtlety and their stupidity and their eating and their drinking and their language."

I'm sorry I've answered your brief question so wordily. . . .

ANNE FREMANTLE.

The Stage & Screen

Years Ago

A HALF dozen good actors, plus the most sophisticated cat I've ever seen, combine to make Ruth Gordon's new comedy completely charming. As readers of the *Atlantic Monthly* know, the play is built from a series of autobiographical articles once published in that magazine, although I should rather call it Miss Gordon's particular version of "Life With Father." Father dominates Wollaston, Mass., here at the Mansfield, just as securely as he does New York City at the Bijou, and I may say, as played by Fredric March, that is very good luck for all concerned. Whether stomping down or up from the cellar at the most impossible moments; explaining the beauties of his spy-glass to uninterested adolescents; chewing his moustaches and worrying out loud; or just plain ROARING, Mr. March is perfect I think: a superlative job. Patricia Kirkland as Ruth, who *will* (and, as we know, *did* and *does*) go on the stage, is as nice; and Florence Eldridge's Mother, whose main anxiety seems to be that God will hear the more uninhibited remarks of the rest of her family, matches precisely. It will be Garson Kanin's direction which has kept the

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whole thing as unaffected and simply moving as it is. I do wish he might have cut a little, the second act could certainly use the shears, but as it is, this is one of the cheering hits and will, one hopes, run and run. (*At the Mansfield.*)

Christopher Blake

MOSS HART'S gigantic examination into the day-and-dream state of a twelve-year-old boy whose parents are being divorced, raises some questions, I think. The business is enormous and shifts from the courthouse, where the boy will have to choose between his parents, to a number of fantastic projections: Christopher at the White House, being honored by the nation but forced to shoot himself because of his parents' disgrace; Christopher as the greatest actor in the world, proving to his mother what it means to be forgotten; Christopher finding his parents in the Poorhouse and righteously leaving them there; and finally, Christopher in his own courthouse, reviled and blamed by the entire world. Mr. Hart resolves his "real" problem by having his child act, at the "real" conclusion, with far more wisdom and love than that displayed by any of the adult persons under view. It would be satisfactory to find some irony in this conclusion, but if it *is* there, I still do not think it was intentional on the part of the author.

There are several angles which seem to me troublesome in Mr. Hart's scheme. The first is that, following his own "Lady in the Dark," plus Mr. Rice's "Dream Girl," what he is really dishing is a formula, and one that is necessarily dependent upon psychoanalytical cliché. It is not, in other words, possible to build the dream sequences beyond average: the *average* imaginative conceptions of an *average* twelve-year-old boy, so that all may run comfortably from A to A, logically, without surprise, and without a good deal of interest. Mr. Hart is no public Dali, and I suppose one must be grateful for this, as certainly Dali's system borrows from the *snigger* what little interest it has. However, and this may appear a digression, it is absorbing to try, in this case, to suit the author's analysis to his character. It seems to me that the employment of a Dickensian Poorhouse with the characters pathetically done-up in mob caps exactly out of Cruikshank, and of an enlarged back-stage scene, complete with jargon, are not truly the stuff of any twelve-year-old's imaginings. They do *not* seem to be average to me. Again, the stress on large engineering, in order to accomplish the piece, is awfully damn silly I think. Historically-technically there is only one way to accomplish the modern irony on the stage and that is, of course, through lighting. The huge architectural countrivances won't do, they simply add another dimension for consideration, and when extended, as they are here, even to the curtain calls, all of the make-believe becomes inextricably mixed, and would need a Pirandello to straighten it out; a part which, admittedly, Mr. Hart is not capable of playing.

However, to return to his exterior, or "real" work at the Music Box, I do think it is possible to say he has developed a modern mess with a good deal of insight. The moral inarticulateness, punctuated by bursts of hysteria, of his parents seems well and sympathetically observed; and the silent intensity of his "real" boy is entirely moving. The latter (or rather the "whole" boy), as played by young Richard Tyler, is already Street history, in case you haven't heard.

Perhaps what is most of all significant about the business is completely exterior. Running down the check list, one finds it is only in two kinds of play (I exclude Mr. Sartre's "Hell" as the exceptional importation) that any consideration of inner, or spiritual, problems is admitted: those concerned with the bottle, and those concerned with psychoanalysis. It becomes apparent that Broadway is growing up. It is becoming nationalistic. The season is a serious one. (*At the Music Box.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Not in *My* Sock

It is amazing that a movie as dull as *"Till the Clouds Roll By"* could be made with music as lively as Jerome Kern's. The picture gets off to a good start with that night in 1927 when "Show Boat" opened; we are treated to several of the songs from this musical; then its composer, reminiscing through the years, tells his story to a taxi-driver. I don't mind particularly that this story is not really the "life" of Jerome Kern, but it is unfortunate that the scriptwriters thought up such a weak plot. Under Richard Whorf's direction, the events creep by at snail's pace as Robert Walker, portraying Kern, and Van Heflin, as his good friend and music arranger, walk through scene after scene of the usual struggle-for-success theme. Drama pops up once in a while: when the Lusitania sails with Frohman, Kern narrowly misses the boat and death; there is a touch of suspense in Kern's romance with an English girl; there is a lot of fussy pathos over the daughter (Lucille Bremer) of Kern's good friend when this spoiled girl runs away from her father because she was denied the privilege of singing "Who" in "Sunny." But most of the episodes are pretty flat and are relieved only by production numbers built around Kern's music.

These songs, as everyone agrees, are among the best composed during the first three decades of this century. It would be foolish to cavil over the choice of selections; naturally not all the best of Kern could be used in one picture, even in a too lengthy one like this; but I do wish they had been presented more imaginatively. Money was spent lavishly and stars galore dance and sing to this delightful music. If you don't fall asleep, you may catch Judy Garland, June Allyson, Van Johnson, Lena Horne, Dinah Shore, Tony Martin, Kathryn Grayson and other well-known personalities putting over such hits as "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," "Look for the Silver Lining," "I Won't Dance," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," "She Didn't Say Yes," "The Last Time I Saw Paris," and many, many more including the film's charming title song. In spite of all the money spent, this picture makes practically no effort to use true cinema and let the camera speak for itself. Bobby sockers will no doubt be thrilled at this collection of their idols and par-

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ticularly at the finale (which is part of an oversized production number with several Kern hits) winding up with Frank Sinatra, with white tie, white suit and pale face, standing alone on a high white pedestal, singing "Old Man River."

Whatever *"The Time, the Place and the Girl"* may lack as worthy entertainment, it at least has sparkle and fast movement. The music by Arthur Schwartz and lyrics by Leon Robin (though not of the Kern calibre) have been staged with pep; and the cast (though not brilliant) at least seems to be having fun with the pointless story. This plot, which is getting more and more worn out as Hollywood continues to make musicals, has to do with opera vs. jazz. The latter of course always wins—this time with the help of Dennis Morgan, Jack Carson and Janis Paige. At first, more interested in classical music are S. Z. Sakall, as a rather charming maestro whose limited mastery of the English language includes such malapropisms as "Willy Nilly" for "Philadelphia," and Martha Vickers, as his pretty granddaughter who doesn't need too much persuading on the part of Morgan to change from opera to swing. The whole group gets involved in putting on a show which gets further involved in finances and other matters pertaining to the maestro's wife and a wealthy oil man from Oklahoma (Alan Hale). Some of the humor is in dubious taste, but Carson and Sakall manage to be very funny at times. This picture also is much too long for its material. We agree, I suppose, that the show must go on—but not endlessly.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

The Roosevelt I Knew. Frances Perkins. Viking. $3.75.

THERE has always been a great temptation, when writing about Franklin Roosevelt, to try out a few remarks about such things as the mystery of human power, and many people who knew him more or less well have set down their impressions of his character and achievements to the accompaniment of some interesting but generally puzzling cosmic noise. I feel fairly certain that the poetry of great man-made activity and the odd chemistry of human personality are as interesting to Frances Perkins as they are to anyone else, but she has spent most of her adult life holding political and economic facts to the knowable level, and, consequently, her explanation of the Roosevelt personality and the New Deal years is so sensible that only those who insist on a splash of something *recherché* with their political history are likely to find it disappointing. Her account of what was going on in Washington between 1933 and 1945 is so reasonable that even the fellows who used to talk about moving to Mexico or Canada could read this book without any great tension. For, as it turns out, there was nothing very occult or labyrinthine there after all, and the Roosevelt Miss Perkins knew was just about like the Roosevelt that a lot of minor men of goodwill always thought they knew.

Miss Perkins knew Franklin Roosevelt from some time in 1910—when he was a young man who had everything, including a touch of arrogance—until the day before his last trip to Warm Springs. She didn't know him well all that time, but she was always aware of him, and from 1928 on, when Roosevelt appointed her Industrial Commissioner for the State of New York, she had an excellent view of the genial man with the right instincts who, by that time, no longer had everything. Her appraisal of the man she worked for is more calm and measured and makes much better sense than the many nervous downright versions written by some very temporary White House wayfarers. She has not, she admits, been in on every conference; heard every anecdote; shared every confidence. She does not even think that Franklin Roosevelt was perfect. In fact (and this might cause a momentary stab of pain and consternation), she thinks that a good share of Franklin Roosevelt's success was the result of the intellectual fittings he didn't have. He didn't greatly care for full-dress thinking, and to John Maynard Keynes, for instance, he seemed, ah, less literate, economically speaking, than he might have been. But he was very fond of the word "decent," and he believed that most notions about a better world could be shrunk to family size by testing them against his understanding of that word. There was nothing very fancy about his religious thinking, either. To Franklin Roosevelt religion was like decency: everyone knew what it was—as he pointed out to Maxim Litvinoff one day in 1933 when they were negotiating the recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States:

> Well now, Max, you know what I mean by religion. You know what religion gives a man. You know the difference between the religious and the irreligious person. Why, you must know, Max, you were brought up by pious parents. Look here, some time you are going to die, and when you come to die, Max, you are going to remember your old father and mother—good, pious Jewish people who believed in God and taught you to pray to God. You had a religious bringing up, and when you come to die, Max, that's what is going to come before you, that is what you are going to think about, thats what you are going to grasp for. You know it's important.

Miss Perkins doesn't do any guessing about how Franklin Roosevelt might have behaved if he had been primarily an intellectual man. She was quite well satisfied with the man who used "all his faculties when thinking about a subject"; the man who was malleable enough to roll with the complex energies of his peculiar land without losing his direction, his optimism, or his nerve.

Since trouble has become international, most people have forgotten how things were when Franklin Roosevelt arrived in Washington and took firm hold of the enormous, blubbering nation whose citizens had been assured that unhappiness didn't exist here, or if it did, it was only temporary and should be called a cyclical decline. But Frances Perkins hasn't forgotten; she remembers very well how the fear and confusion of January, 1933, were replaced by a positive state of mind known as the New Deal, and her description of the ferment that characterized the first two Roosevelt terms (the Blue Eagle, the public works programs, the CCC, social security, the birth of the CIO) makes very exciting reading. The plans weren't always flawless, she says, and often everybody was talking at once, but the planners were all certain—especially Franklin Roosevelt—that the possibilities of American life had not run out. In addition to every other good that came out of those eight years, Miss Perkins believes that, intuitively, Franklin Roosevelt was seasoning and

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unifying the American spirit to withstand the radio reports for Sunday, December 7th, 1941.

Miss Perkins has a nice, tidy pride in her own share in that period of preparation, as well as in the years that came after, and she can back it up with the best possible recommendation—a talk she had with Franklin Roosevelt on the eve of his final inauguration, when she asked that he allow her to resign:

> "No," he said. "Frances, you can't go now. You mustn't put this on me now. I just can't be bothered now. I can't think of anybody else, and I can't get used to anybody else. Not now! Do stay there and don't say anything. You are all right." . . .
>
> "Frances, you have done awfully well. I know what you have been through. I know what you have accomplished. Thank you."

Franklin Roosevelt didn't talk that way to just anybody, but (and this is certainly a rare quality) even so clear an indication of his approval has not led Miss Perkins to believe that she has been commissioned to bind and loose American society in Franklin Roosevelt's name. She doesn't claim to know what he would have done in 1946, which probably proves that she understood him better than did other, less hesitant, Roosevelt associates.

Miss Perkins' story of the war years is, like the rest of her book, confined to what she saw at first hand. What Miss Perkins has to say about those days won't be of much help to that tireless little band of congressmen who seem to believe that they will some day come upon a typewritten sheet of paper under a rug in the White House which will prove that Franklin Roosevelt started the whole thing. And Winston Churchill? As far as Frances Perkins knows, Franklin Roosevelt found him to be, after some preliminary misgivings, just fine.

On the day before he left for Warm Springs, Franklin Roosevelt met the members of his cabinet for the last time. He hadn't been looking at all well for quite a while, but on that day he looked and sounded fit again. Frances Perkins talked to him for about fifteen or twenty minutes; asked him if, in the middle of May, she could bring in to see him a group of people who would be in Washington conferring on labor legislation at the next Congressional session. He wouldn't be there in the middle of May, he said. First, there was the opening of the United Nations Conference, at San Francisco, and then he would be off for a visit to England. But the war, Frances Perkins said, what about the war? A visit to England would be too dangerous.

> Although we were alone in the room, he put his hand to the side of his mouth and whispered, "The war in Europe will be over by the end of May."

Miss Perkins likes to think about that now; she finds it comforting to remember that Franklin Roosevelt was so sure, two weeks before his death, that the war in Europe was nearly over. I like to think about it, too.

JOHN BRODERICK.

Battle for Chicago. Wayne Andrews. Harcourt. $3.75.

COMMERCIAL expediency has been the predominant note of Chicago life that has rarely been modified in its stridency. Reading the "Battle for Chicago," by Wayne Andrews brings a degree of understanding of the genesis of this quality, and of the vitality of the place. This characteristic of commercial expediency, as one might suspect from its unselfconscious naturalness, is deep-seated and has its root in the formative, early years of the city, in the time of its commercial and industrial beginning. For Chicago, as Mr. Andrews states, was settled by people who went there to "make money."

Not that this particularly distinguishes it from other large cities in the country, but there was the difference, in most cases, that these other cities had something like a definite character when the intensified money-making invasion occurred. This was not so in Chicago where the city formed itself around people overwhelmingly devoted to the acquisition of wealth. For Chicago is a producing center, in contrast to its one superior in size, New York, which is a brokerage center, and in which financing is merely a phase in the operations of the entrepreneur. This distinction also penetrates into the realm of ideas, and of artistic and literary production. Chicago, moreover, conveys the impression that the metal of hard labor had entered the fibres of the city's being, and, as John Brophy, in the "Human Face," said of the British, the typical Chicago countenance "records the communal experience of industrialism."

The robustness of the city, as pictured by Mr. Andrews, has been of the sapping rather than invigorating kind and its giantism has been paralleled by an overesteemed artistic and intellectual mediocrity. This again is as an aspect of its commercial ruthlessness, born of a distrust for a none too readily controlled idealism, manifesting itself in art. The native geniuses, as indicated in this book, could only have found survival and occupation by conformity to a standard that would have spiritually destroyed them. Yet genius of a rare kind has appeared there, somewhat like an unwanted child, and as a direct outcome of the innate fertility of the place. No other environment in America, it would seem, could have produced the architects Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, men who went counter to the prevailing artistic provincialism and established international types and standards in their work. It is to Chicago's honor to have produced them, and to its shame for having, in effect, rejected them. And that rejection was of a spontaneous kind, inevitable in a city which regarded Daniel Burnham as a great architect, probably because he became a millionaire.

No group in the city, religious or social, has escaped the impress of this corrosive element of commercial expediency. That there have been cultured and religious back waters does not, unfortunately, alter the general picture. The tone of life has been of one kind, and the religious and other groups have taken their coloration from it. All of this is implicit in Mr. Andrews's stimulating historical narrative of the city's life, a life which he sees to be symbolized in the commercial and industrial magnates that conditions forced up through the crust of his uniformity. The McCormicks, Pullman, Medill, Armour, and Marshall Field, of whom he writes at length were the general types which were repeated throughout the graduations of financial status during the community's growth. They were at once creators and creatures of the robot-like life they helped produce, as well as victims of the city's over-prolonged adolescence. Yet Chicago has an impressive quality, that of fertility, which Carl Sandburg has described in his characteristic poetry. In that fertility lies the real significance of the place and the hope for a maturity when it finds widespread outlet in other than material ways.

BARRY BYRNE.

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The Idols of the Cave. Frederic Prokosch. Doubleday. $2.75.

IN HIS new novel Frederic Prokosch has left the colors of Europe and Asia and taken New York as the subject of his particular talent. It is the scenery if not the substance of disillusion. His vague young hero wanders in and out of love through a mirrored world of New York society, with its stale and mannered hostesses, its vain ballet dancers, and its émigrés, hanging desperately to what is left of pride and riches. They are all frightened and sick at heart, and they do not have enough identity to free themselves from the nameless city.

The trouble with "The Idols of the Cave" is that it is not committed. I cannot see that it is concerned with any one man or woman. The hero becomes merely an abstracted medium. The result is that the book is full of ethereal, affected people, who talk nonsense because they are given no direction. One is not sure that Prokosch cares one way or the other about them.

I should add that the same abstracted, poetic air which devitalizes his characters has a kind of attractiveness about it. As in Prokosch's other novels it still seems youthfully serious. It is full of the perceptions of brightness and the excitements of love.

In his descriptive passages Prokosch projects some of the dry violence of New York; but his characters are always excluded. There is no outward concern with them.

Johnathan, the hero, finally sees the pattern of his relationships broken up. "The fruit of human contact had never ripened. The climate was too tempestuous, too arid."

This lack of "human contact" is what leaves the novel with no choice and no will. Detachment kills it.

JOHN HAY.

Short Journey. E. L. Woodward. Oxford. $3.00.

"ENGROSSING" is one of the first adjectives that come to mind, as one lays down this autobiography of an Oxford don who long ago achieved distinction in writing and teaching history. If the reader is old enough, he may be reminded, now of A. C. Benson, now of Siegfried Sassoon, now of Robert Graves in his early (and more attractive?) years. Perceptiveness, frankness, serenity, humor, and a captivating digressiveness draw one on and on: thumbnail sketches of people of all types, together with beautifully etched descriptions of landscapes and architecture in two hemispheres, frequently cause one to linger. And the book is almost as deep as it is broad. Indeed, descriptions of persons and places are often starting points for very thoughtful comments on the trends and the developments, the blunders and the tragedies, of the past half century. An undergraduate examination in "Greats" poses the question of the value of the Greek philosophers as mentors for contemporary youth. Contacts with Bishop Gore, Father Tyrrell and the Abbé Portal supply bases for the consideration of high church Anglicanism, modernism, and kindred questions. Later come reflections on such matters as the tragic death of the British Liberal Party, the ultimate causes of the two World Wars, the pros and cons of planned economy, and the prospects of a lasting peace. To disagree at some points is easy: not to pay tribute to the independence, breadth and acumen of the author's thinking would be impossible.

Yet Mr. Woodward, writing avowedly as representative of most Britons of his kind, will leave some readers in a mood of rather puzzled sympathy. A man, not only eminent in knowledge and intellect, but with a strong religious bent, he seems to be groping in a spiritual fog as thick as the "pea soupers" for which his native London has been notorious. The writings of the materialists he finds "unconvincing to the point of silliness." And he knows no "ceremony on earth more profound, more humble, and more magnificent than the Christian Mass." On the other hand, this fellow of All Souls, of that ancient college where the highest Anglican dignitaries are wont to pay visits, attends the chapel services only "as a matter of formality," and feels about them only as he once felt when, "in a Moslem country," he "listened with respect to a circle of devout men reciting the Koran." For he concludes that Christian doctrine, based upon an "interlocked structure of history and logic" can "no longer satisfy the mind." The same conclusion is voiced frequently and dogmatically by teachers in American, as well as British, universities, just at this time when people are feeling the need for guidance as they have not done in centuries. *"Multi dicunt, Quis ostendit nobis bona?"* But, unlike the Psalmist, these teachers find no light to pierce the fog, and bring them happiness and peace. Groping, they seem desirous that a coming generation shall grope, too.

H. C. F. BELL.

The Formative Years of the Catholic University of America. John Tracy Ellis. American Catholic Historical Association. $3.00.

FROM THE sere and yellowing pages of old letters, minutes of meetings, and episcopal diaries and memoranda that have reposed for half a century in the archives of the archdioceses of Baltimore, New York, and Cincinnati and of the dioceses of Rochester and Richmond, Dr. John Tracy Ellis has drawn most of his material. And from early issues of the *Catholic World* and the *American Ecclesiastical Review* and the musty files of Catholic and secular newspapers, some now defunct, he has found facts with which to fill in many lacunae left by the manuscripts. He has adroitly avoided sketchiness by supplying all the pertinent ascertainable details, dullness by eliminating the unnecessary and irrelevant.

Most readers will be astonished to learn that the first suggestion of a national Catholic university in the United States came as early as about 1819 from the Irish-born Augustinian Father Robert Browne. No less surprising is Dr. Ellis's description of the long and heated dispute over the location of the proposed university and the seriousness with which many of the bishops urged the conversion of some such existing institutions as Seton Hall College at South Orange, N. J., Mount St. Mary's Seminary at Emmitsburg, Md., or the seminary at Troy, N. Y., into a national university. Archbishop Corrigan wanted the university in New York, and he wanted it run by the Jesuits. Cardinal Gibbons wanted it in Philadelphia. And Bishop McQuaid appears not to have wanted it at all at that time, because he thought that the Catholics in the United States were not ready for such an institution.

It is well known that Bishop John Lancaster Spalding of Peoria played an important part in promoting the project of the new university. He began by talking about

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a university as that term is ordinarily understood; later he advocated what he called a *seminarium principale;* finally, as the time for the opening of the university drew near, he appears to have returned to his idea of a real university, although he knew it would be some years before schools other than the graduate school of theology could be organized.

It is unlikely that any documents discovered in the future will modify in any important way the picture Dr. Ellis has drawn. His research has been painstaking and thorough, and the result is truly scholarly. Samuel Butler once cynically remarked, "Although God cannot alter the past, historians can." On account of the author's long association with the Catholic University both as student and professor, he might have been expected to betray some partisanship. But he plays no favorites; his treatment of friends and foes of the university is admirably fair and objective.

Perhaps the most dramatic moment in the history of the founding of the University was provided by John Ireland. He and Cardinal Gibbons and Bishop Keane were in Rome in the spring of 1887 awaiting the Pope's official approval of the University. In an interview with Cardinal Simeoni, Gibbons learned of the opposition expressed by certain American bishops, notably by the Archbishop of New York. He told Keane what he had heard from the Prefect of Propaganda, and the two decided it would be best to abandon the idea of the University. When John Ireland, who had been absent from Rome for a few days, returned and learned of their decision he indignantly and vehemently objected to what he called "so cowardly a surrender to so unworthy an opposition." Gibbons and Keane changed their minds. The Cardinal explained the plan for the University to the Pope and answered objections that had been raised against it. Papal approval was quickly won. It was expressed in Leo XIII's Brief of April 10, 1887.

It speaks well for the wit of Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan of Philadelphia that his more or less extemporaneous response to the toast to "The Hierarchy of the United States," delivered at the opening of the University, seems funny even today. The only other touch of humor in Dr. Ellis's book comes from the fine Italian hand of Leo XIII. He could be extremely witty on occasion, as when he made the sign of the cross over the kneeling form of one of the most ardent Italian advocates of cremation and pronounced the words a priest says in a solemn high Mass over the incense that is about to be burned: *"Ab Illo benedicaris in cujus honore cremaberis. Amen."*

One finishes Dr. Ellis's book with both satisfaction and regret: with satisfaction that the University has become a reality, with regret that the author does not go on with the story. But the first great struggle in the history of the institution is over, and the class bell rings down the curtain, as the University begins to develop within itself, to inspire and stimulate the growth of other universities, and to exert a powerful influence on all levels of Catholic education in America. Other conflicts will follow, but they will be less intense, and they will have less human interest.

BONAVENTURE SCHWINN.

Do I Wake Or Sleep? Isabel Bolton. Scribners. $2.50.

I SLEPT; but from exhaustion, not from boredom. Certainly not boredom. It was just that the taking of everything quite so seriously—so intensely, so that

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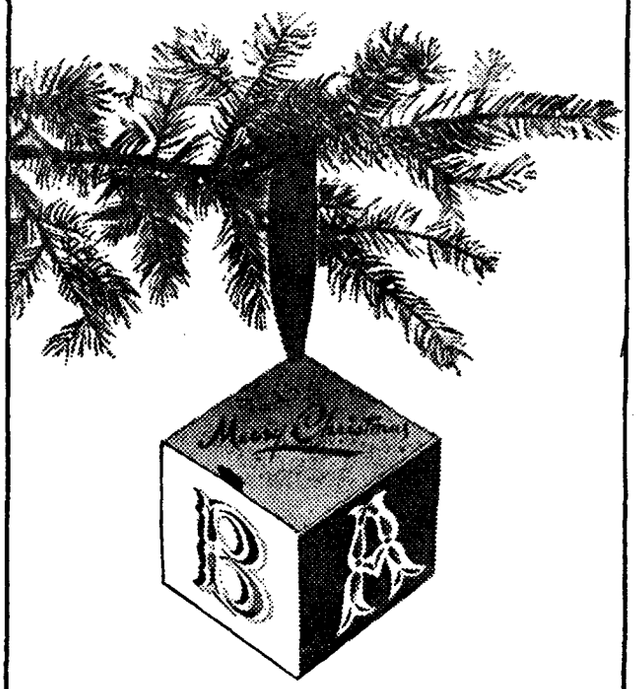

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whenever any of the three of them, Bridget St. Dennis or Percy or Millicent, saw anything, the color of the claret in their glass or of the madrilene in their cup or the pigeons sleeping in the cornices and window ledges on Fifth Avenue, thereafter nothing was ever the same again, for it was as though their icy heart had crystallized, yes, that was it, into an apricot, frosted all over with little silver stars—and the recurrent dashes—and the constant parentheses (because they all took such long mental breaths) all left me completely worn out.

So that when Bridget (weaning the chivalrous alcoholic Percy away from his longing to help her idiot child caught by the nazis over a meal at the Restaurant Chambord whose description beggars any advertisement Longchamps ever paid good money for, and all free) really talked most intelligently and memorably about Proust and the difference between European and American novelists, I was too stunned and dizzy and dazed too like a fish, a cold fish knocked out for cold on a slab to enjoy it as I should.

It is not that Millicent's stream of consciousness is incorrectly rendered: the tenuous story, of the brittle Beatrice almost melted by the tenderness of the naïve Percy, both watched by the feline, quiveringly vulnerable spinster Millicent, aching in every atrophied gland with every imaginable unsated, thwarted and sentimentalized instinct, is truthfully seen and told. But, though the stream of consciousness is indeed always and unbearably with us, so that it's catch as catch can for anyone who dips into it with a tea-strainer or a salmon net, yet the difference is in the degree of significance: who gives the haul significance, even for an instant, is a writer: who fails, is what you will—recorder, journalist, moralist; one rescues deep sea treasure, the other lands flotsam. Miss Bolton's people are flotsam, though her situation is a pure pearl: the surfeited, lacquered, bejewelled mother casting the thick shadow of her mongoloid child, that drools its uncouth sounds, tricked up by the nazis in grotesque costume, to be laughed at, little Jewess; and the ridiculous cocktail party to end all cocktail parties, with the brilliantly contrived fight between the amorous and inebriated Percy and the Rich Young Price. But reality passes through these three unreal people; they are as unmoved by, and as unrelated to it as the bird that has swallowed a haw, through whom passes hidden the whole life and splendor of the rose. Miss Bolton writes exceedingly well; but she needs people to write about.

ANNE FREMANTLE.

Central-Eastern Europe. Joseph S. Roucek and Associates. Prentice. $5.00.

BOTH the First and the Second World Wars originated in the region to which the editor gives the rather unusual name of Central-Eastern Europe. And if we are still to be punished with a Third World War, we may be pretty sure that it will originate over quarrels in the very same region: *terra incognita* to most Americans.

Thus a handbook on the affairs of the small countries of this complex part of Europe—including Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Esthonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Jugoslavia, Albania, Greece and Turkey—is very useful indeed. Unfortunately, the eleven authors cooperating in this

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book maintain an unequal standard, and evidence very different philosophies. Several treat the country of their origin with the favoritism of a propagandist while they criticize the neighbor countries in a rather unfair way. The unhappy consequence is that the book is nearly as complex as its subject matter, and often reads like an uneven compilation.

As the book compresses a lot of valuable reference material, students of world politics will find it useful, in spite of minor inaccuracies and numerous typographical errors. The crucial problem of Central-Eastern Europe, the power policy of the Kremlin, is not exhibited freely enough by several contributors to this book. The editor, at least, exposes the simple technique of the Red imperialism rather efficiently in the last chapter. "When the Soviet Army occupied such states as Bulgaria, the Communist Party immediately popped up from the underground as the leader in some such organization of leftists as the so-called Patriotic Front. The next step was for the local communists to gain power by taking key positions in the government, notably those involving control of the police and means of expression. After that, the local Reds proceeded to purge their political opponents."

On the other hand, the editor tries to find some extenuating circumstances for Russia's mistrust of the West and the unchecked extension of her sphere of influence. He is not very decided over the question whether the Communist International was strengthened or weakened by the official dissolution of the Comintern in 1943. Dr. Roucek, in this book apparently does not follow the recently emphasized idea of the Catholic bishops of the United States holding that peace-making requires a basic agreement on what man is. To him the impediment on both sides is merely fear: our "communist bogey" and the "capitalist bogey" of the Russians. He claims that the Soviets's political methods stem less from lust for power than from a consciousness of vulnerability. He is aware, however, that former Comintern officials emerged prominently in nearly all Central-Eastern countries. Many of them at one time or another had not only worked for Moscow, but even inside of Moscow, as had Poland's Bierut, Jugoslovia's Tito and Bulgaria's Dimitrov. Are these not aggressive tactics? To this reviewer it seems just whitewash to explain away Russia's power policy as defensive interests. Aims and methods have been up to now whole-heartedly offensive and have succeeded in separating Central-Eastern Europe from Western influence, forcing it ruthlessly under a detestable system of tyranny that rules by blackmail and violence.

MAX FISCHER.

Saint Martin of Tours. Henri Ghéon. Sheed. $2.00. *Gailhac of Béziers. Helene Magaret. Longmans.* $3.50.

IT IS remarkable how much is known today of the great bishop who evangelized France sixteen hundred years ago. For that we have to thank his more or less contemporary biographers, Sulplicius Severus and Gregory of Tours, as well as the devoted labor of a number of modern French scholars. M. Ghéon has utilized this material to the full to present a well-rounded and impressive short biography, filled with love and anxiety for France, with her 3,500 churches dedicated to Saint Martin. Some readers may be surprised to learn that the miracle of the cloak was only the first event in the saint's life as a Christian (as a catechumen in fact)—a long life resplendent with miracles, mass conversions and per-

ANTIDOTES

It may sound slightly blasphemous to say that God is extraordinarily interesting and nonsense to say that unless you see the world as The Church sees it (which after all means seeing the real world) you are a little mad. But before you have read more than a dozen pages of the 400 in F. J. Sheed's

THEOLOGY AND SANITY ($3.00)

you will be agreeing to both and settling in your chair to get on with it. The book contains, says the author, all the theology he knows—enough to keep us from succumbing to madness in an increasingly mad world. Sanity for $3.00—what psychiatrist could do it at the price? And entertain you too?

In case you wonder if a layman has any business to be teaching theology, we refer you to the current issue of Sheed & Ward's OWN TRUMPET (free on request) which contains full-length reviews by Father Walter Farrell, O.P. and Father Augustine Hennessy, C.P., both enthusiastic enough to make the author blush.

It took an atomic bomb to make Msgr. Knox look up from translating the Bible. Once roused, he wrote

GOD AND THE ATOM ($2.00)

still (we think) the best treatment of the Catholic point of view on Hiroshima. Now he has paused again, and this time to give a retreat to some of his fellow clergy. We publish it in book form this week. There are eighteen conferences in

RETREAT FOR PRIESTS ($2.50)

based on Old Testament stories, compared with New Testament incidents. "Between the two" says the author "we ought, by God's help, to be able to see what warning it was or what encouragement that the Holy Ghost meant us to draw when he inspired the sacred authors to write as they did." We haven't much doubt about the clergy liking this book, but it has a second use, which we don't think the author ever suspected—for laymen it is a perfect antidote to incipient anticlericalism: we never understood the problems, trials and consolations of the clergy so well before.

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sonal heroism. M. Ghéon tells the story well and with patent feeling. Yet for all his well-labeled imaginary conversations and the wealth of biographical data at his hand, his life of Saint Martin, because of the passage of the centuries, has a formal almost archeological quality reminiscent of the much briefer saints' lives found in Matins throughout the Christian year.

The contrast, for instance, between this work of M. Ghéon's and Helene Magaret's account of a modern French saint (as yet not canonized) could scarcely be more marked. Her biography with the unpronounceable name is really in the form of a novel—with Father Gailhac's feelings, innermost thoughts and conversations with dignitaries and outcasts fully reproduced. For a writer who has not entered fully and faithfully into the life of his subject this is a dangerous technique, especially when dealing with a saintly man—the temptations to oversentimentalization, the perils of subjectivism, etc., etc. Miss Magaret's story is therefore remarkable in the first place in that she has not often succumbed to such temptations.

Her narrative presents a humble nineteenth century French priest who has special solicitude for the sinner and the outcasts of society. At times, as when cholera swept his locality and the hospital of which he was chaplain, his works rise to the spectacular. For the most part Father Gailhac struggled along day by day despite physical obstacles, public indifference and calumny of the foulest sort, to establish places of refuge for orphans and outcasts, to found religious orders (primarily the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary) and ever more religious houses in France and abroad. But the most noteworthy thing about Miss Magaret's story is the degree of genuine emotional intensity it succeeds in maintaining. Sanctity of the heroic sort is the dominating theme and yet not in such a way that the rest of us grow disheartened at the vast gulf which extends between the tenor of Father Gailhac's way of life and our own.

Very few books which deal with pressing current problems and at the same time delineate the satisfying portrait of a man could also serve as effective spiritual reading. This book could. Anyone who wants a comprehensive, everyday grasp of what sanctity does mean—how positive is its orientation—should turn to this life of Father Gailhac.

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